MARINE MAMMAL, SEA TURTLE, AND DEBRIS SIGHTING LOG

The purpose of this log is to record all marine mammal, sea turtle, and debris sightings. Also, the observer records sighting effort (time spent looking) for transit watches, including time when no sightings are made. This information is critical in determining the temporal and spatial distribution of these animals and debris, and the relative abundance and behavior of animals in the vicinity of fishing operations. Sea bird sightings are not recorded here.

The types of sightings and watches, and the proper procedures for conducting each type of watch are described in the Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle and Debris Watches section of the NEFSC Observer Program Training Manual.

Each time a transit watch is conducted, this effort must be recorded on the log with a "begin" watch and "end" watch record (see EVENT TYPE codes, #3). Begin and end watch times must be at least one minute apart. A sighting of a marine mammal, sea turtle or debris may **NOT** be recorded in the same record as a "begin" or "end" watch record. For gillnet fisheries, **do not record begin and end haul watch information** as this information is already recorded on the Gillnet Haul Log.

An animal must not be recorded on both the Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle, and Debris Sighting Log **and** the Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle, and Sea Bird Incidental Take Log. See the Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle, and Sea Bird Incidental Take Log in the NEFSC Observer Program Manual for more detailed instructions on deciding when an animal is a sighting versus an incidental take. An animal determined to be an incidental take is recorded on the Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle, and Sea Bird Incidental Take Log.

Any **debris caught during a haul** is recorded on the Haul Log (or the Individual Animal Log in pelagic fisheries) and not on this log.

INSTRUCTIONS

For instructions on completing fields **A-C** refer to the Common Haul Data section of the NEFSC Observer Program Manual.

1. TODAY'S DATE: Record the month, day, and year that the event being described occurred.
Example: 03/20/01.

EVENT INFORMATION

2. TIME: Record the local time using the 24 hour clock (0000-2359) that the event being described occurred.
Example: 20:32.

3. TYPE CODE: Indicate the type of event that occurred by recording the most appropriate two digit code:

For Watches Only - When a marine mammal, sea turtle, and debris watch is conducted, record one of the following begin/end watch event type codes:
01 = Begin transit watch.
02 = End transit watch.
03 = Begin set watch.
04 = End set watch.
05 = Begin haul watch.
06 = End haul watch.
NOTE: For gillnet fisheries, **do not record begin and end haul watch information** as this information is already recorded on the Gillnet Haul Log.

For Sightings Only - When a marine mammal, sea turtle, or debris sighting is made, record one of the following sighting event type codes to indicate whether the observer is on- or off-effort, and to best describe the vessel activity at the time the sighting was made:
08 = On-effort, during dedicated watch.
10 = Off-effort, vessel activity unknown.
11 = Off-effort, vessel stop/anchor/drift.
12 = Off-effort, sitting on gear.
13 = Off-effort, transiting or searching.
14 = Off-effort, towing gear.
15 = Off-effort, hauling in gear.
16 = Off-effort, setting out gear.
17 = Off-effort, waiting for J/V transfer.
18 = Off-effort, taking J/V transfer.
NOTE: If the sighting is made during a watch,

the sighting event code is always "On-effort, during dedicated watch" (08).

General:

00 = Unknown.

99 = Other, describe the event type in COMMENTS.

NOTE: Use code 99 to describe dedicated sighting activity outside of the specified watches.

4. POSITION CODE: Indicate the location and position of the observer on the vessel at the time of this event by recording the most appropriate one digit code:

00 = Unknown.

01 = Bow, facing forward.

02 = Wheelhouse, facing forward.

03 = Wheelhouse, facing backward.

04 = Work deck, facing backward.

05 = Work deck, facing sideways.

06 = Starboard side, facing net.

07 = Port side, facing net.

99 = Other, describe the position in COMMENTS.

NOTE: If the sighting is not seen by the observer, record "Other" (99), and describe in COMMENTS.

5. HAUL NUMBER: Record the haul number assigned to the haul in which any on-effort events or off-effort sightings occurred between the beginning and end of a haul. This number must agree with the number recorded for this haul on the corresponding Haul Log.

NOTE: If the event does not occur during a haul, record a dash (-).

6. LATITUDE/LONGITUDE OR LORAN: Record the latitude and longitude location, to the tenth of a minute, where the event occurred. If the latitude and longitude location is given in seconds, convert them to tenths of minutes. If latitude and longitude positions are not available, record the LORAN stations and bearings.

NOTE: See Appendix Q. Conversion Tables for a list of second ranges and corresponding conversions to tenths of minutes.

NOTE: If **neither** latitude/longitude or LORAN positions are available, record the statistical area as listed in Appendix E.1. Map of Statistical Areas of the Northeast U.S. or Appendix E.2. Map of Statistical Areas of the Southeast U.S.

Example: 35 23.4 75 16.7   or
            9960X 27054 9960Y 41824

NOTE: While **9960-** loran chains are the most frequently used chains within this program's jurisdiction, in extreme northern and southern areas other chains may be used, such as:
Southern North Carolina: **7980-**
Canadian: **5930-** .

7. WEATHER CODE: Indicate the weather at the time the event occurred by recording the most appropriate two digit code listed in Appendix K. Weather Codes.

8. WAVE HEIGHT: Record, in whole feet, the wave height at the time the event occurred. If the wave height is less than six inches, record "0".

NOTE: This is **not** a range.

9. COMMENTS?: Indicate whether there is a comment associated with this event by recording the appropriate code:

0 = No.

1 = Yes.

IF THE EVENT RECORDED IS A MARINE MAMMAL, SEA TURTLE, OR DEBRIS SIGHTING, COMMENTS MUST BE INCLUDED. COMMENTS are recorded on the Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle, and Debris Sighting Comments Log. Each event has an unique EVENT TIME per day. Care should be taken to correctly record the matching EVENT TIME on both logs.

Sighting comments should include all field characteristics **actually seen** by the observer and used to make an identification of the animal. Any unusual marks, scars or coloration on the animal(s) should be noted. Size of animal(s) should be included if an estimation is possible. Record ranges of the number of animals sighted, including the number of calves. Behaviors of the animal(s) sighted should be included, such as swim speed and direction and any other activities noted while the animal(s) was (were) observed.

Observed associations with other vessels, marine

life or oceanographic phenomena (*i.e.* wind rows, current lines, flotsam, jetsam or a dramatic change of water color in the immediate area) should also be included. If photographs were taken, record the CAMERA NUMBER and FRAME NUMBERS.

It is important to document any marine debris, whether in the area of animals or not. The debris and its approximate size(s) should be described in general terms, *e.g.*, plastic sheeting 1 meter square, trawl webbing 0.5(m) X 3.0(m), *etc.* If derelict gear is picked up on purpose to be disposed of properly, take photographs and record in COMMENTS any marine life that may be entangled. Debris entanglement and ingestion have been documented as sources of mortality for marine mammals, sea turtles, sea birds, fish, and shellfish (Shomura and Yoshida 1985). Sea turtles often utilize large pieces of debris for shelter.

SIGHTING INFORMATION

NOTE: If the record or event being recorded is not a sighting, leave the following fields (#10-#15) blank.

10. SPECIES NAME: Record the complete common name of each marine mammal, sea turtle, or debris sighted, as listed in Appendix A. Species Names.

NOTE: If it is not possible to make a positive species identification, identify the animal to the most specific generic group of which you are positive, *i.e.* baleen whale, unidentified dolphin, seal, sea turtle, *etc.* **DO NOT GUESS AT SPECIES IDENTIFICATION**.

Examples: Unidentified Whale.
Harbor Porpoise.

11. SPECIES CODE: Leave this field blank.

12. NUMBER OF ANIMALS: Record the number of animals sighted. **Do not record a range.**

NOTE: If the sighting is debris, record a dash (-) in this field.

13. SIGHT CUE CODE: Indicate how the sighting was **first** detected by recording the most appropriate one digit code:

0 = Unknown.
1 = Sighted with naked eye.
2 = Sighted with binoculars.
3 = First sighted by captain or crew, then by observer.
4 = Sighted by captain or crew **ONLY**.
9 = Other, describe the sight cue in COMMENTS.

14. ANIMAL CONDITION CODE: Indicate the condition of the animal(s) sighted by recording the most appropriate two digit code:

00 = Unknown, explain why you can not identify the animal condition in COMMENTS.
01 = Alive, condition unknown.
02 = Alive, not injured.
03 = Alive, injured, describe how the animal is injured in COMMENTS.
04 = Alive, hook/gear in/around mouth, attempt to determine where in the mouth the hook is, *etc.* and describe in COMMENTS.
05 = Alive, hook/gear in/around flipper, *i.e.* hook in the flipper or gear around the flipper.
06 = Alive, hook/gear in/around another single body part, *i.e.* hook in the neck or plastron; specify which in COMMENTS.
07 = Alive, hook/gear in/around several body parts, describe more fully in COMMENTS.
08 = Alive, seen by captain and/or crew ONLY.
10 = Dead, condition unknown.
11 = Dead, fresh.
12 = Dead, moderately decomposed.
13 = Dead, severely decomposed.
14 = Dead, seen by captain and/or crew ONLY.

NOTE: Codes 04-07 exist primarily to improve descriptions of sea turtles. However, these codes may be used, as appropriate, for other animals.

NOTE: If the sighting is debris, leave this field blank.

15. ANIMAL BEHAVIOR CODE: Indicate the **initial** behavior of the animal(s) when first sighted by recording the most appropriate two digit code:

00 = Unknown.
01 = Near gear, physical contact.
02 = Near gear, within 50 meters.
03 = Near gear, within 51 to 150 meters.
04 = Feeding on catch.

05 = Porpoising: the animal(s) is (are) splashing along at the surface, breaking the surface regularly, showing most of the body.

06 = Bow riding: the animal(s) is (are) observed keeping pace with the vessel on the bow wave.

07 = Breaching: the animal(s) emerge(s) from the water and crash(es) down on a flank, back or belly.

08 = Swimming at surface: the animal(s) is (are) observed several times surfacing 'normally', each surfacing at some irregular distance from the previous one; it (they) appear(s) to be just moving along.

09 = Milling: the animal(s) is (are) rolling at the surface with no direction, making short dives without moving along. Often a group activity.

10 = Motionless at surface (or dead).

11 = Vessel avoidance: the animal(s) abruptly change(s) its (their) swimming direction or behavior to avoid the vessel; a startling, alarming, fleeing reaction.

12 = Vessel attraction: the animal(s) change(s) its (their) swimming direction to approach the vessel, such as a pod of dolphins purposefully heading toward the vessel to bowride.

99 = Other, describe the animal behavior in COMMENTS.

NOTE: If the animal(s) exhibit(s) multiple behaviors, record the code for the **initial behavior** only, and describe all subsequent behaviors in COMMENTS. If **multiple initial** animal behaviors exist for one sighting, record the lowest numerical code which applies, and record the other behaviors in COMMENTS.

NOTE: If there are a large number of animals (same species) that appear to be in a cohesive group, record the **initial behavior** of the majority of the animals. If a large number of animals (same species) appear to be in distinct groups behaving differently, record each group as a separate sighting.

NOTE: If the sighting is debris, leave this field blank.